

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Regular Meeting

April 5, 2021  
6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting  
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, and Councilmembers Barksdale, Lee, Robertson, Stokes, and Zahn

ABSENT: None.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Robinson presiding. She noted that this is National Public Health Week and thanked all of the public health professionals who dedicate themselves to making Bellevue a safe and healthy community.

2. Roll Call; Flag Salute

City Clerk Charmaine Arredondo called the roll. All Councilmembers were present and participating remotely.

(a) Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis read the proclamation recognizing April 2021 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Bellevue and encouraged everyone to join advocates and communities throughout King County in taking action to prevent sexual violence by standing with survivors.

Councilmember Lee led the flag salute.

3. Approval of Agenda

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4. Oral Communications

- (a) Sean Thorson, American Capital Group, expressed support for the 15 Lake Bellevue Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) application to develop approximately 250 apartments, including at least 50 affordable homes, directly adjacent to a light rail station. He noted that he submitted a letter earlier in the week that provides more details about the benefits of the proposal, including environmental improvements. The development will include secured parking, commercial space, pedestrian amenities, and a public park. He expressed concern that the City wants them to wait to see if their project is included in the Wilburton planning and implementation effort later this year or in 2022.
- (b) Lisa Skinner said she works at the Bellevue Fred Meyer store. She expressed concern that more than 300 employees do not qualify for hazard pay. She asked whether the City could take action to enable the store to qualify for hazard pay. She said she would submit letters from her co-workers regarding their proposal.
- (c) Kristen Bryant commented regarding the South Downtown I-405 Access proposal, expressing concern about adding more infrastructure for single-occupancy vehicles. She said Bellevue should instead invest in infrastructure to support transit use and walking. She said the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is working on an expansion of I-90 in the Eastgate area. She said there is a blocked fish passage in the area but the I-90 project will not repair it. Ms. Bryant encouraged investments in light rail access, bus lanes, and bike and pedestrian access in the downtown.
- (d) Andrew Pardoe expressed concern regarding the South Downtown I-405 Access project and the cost of \$150 million to save drivers 20 seconds of travel time. He said that a similar project on I-405 North did not build us out of traffic congestion. He discouraged continued investments in road infrastructure.
- (e) Michelle Wannamaker expressed concern that the City's minimum parking requirements for housing for senior adults and disabled people violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She said that while many older adults are able to walk to transit connections, others need a car to maintain their independence and mobility. She expressed concern about the proposal to change the distance for the frequent transit criteria from one-quarter mile to one-half mile in considering parking requirements for housing developments. She encouraged the City Council to instruct the legal department to review RCW 36.78.620 and RCW 49.60.030 regarding discrimination, and to work with the state Attorney General to seek clarification regarding the laws. Ms. Wannamaker asked the Council to continue to require off-street parking for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- (f) Kim Loveall Price, Executive Director of Downtown Action to Save Housing (DASH), commented on their partnership with the City to preserve and increase the amount of affordable housing in Bellevue. She thanked the City's planning staff for its thorough analysis of the threshold issues proposed in the DASH Glendale CPA proposal. She thanked the Planning Commission for its diligent review and discussion of the complex issues related to CPAs. She expressed concern, however, that the threshold review

discussion was not based on the merits of the DASH property or staff's recommendation, but rather on its parity with another CPA proposal. She asked the City Council to support the CPA and its commitment to providing affordable housing.

- (g) Victor Bishop, representing the Eastside Transportation Association (ETA), said the organization was involved in the development of, and supported, the I-405 master plan approved in 2002. He said the ETA submitted a letter dated March 31, 2021, supporting the Lake Hills Connector alternative for the South Downtown I-405 Access project. He suggested adding the auxiliary lane to the current contract with WSDOT through 2023. He said the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension is an integral part of the Downtown-Wilburton grid system, and it is included in the I-405 master plan with a half-diamond interchange. Mr. Bishop asked the Council to continue to consider the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street project. However, he said the ETA believes that Main Street might be a better location for the access.
- (h) Chris Buchanan, Director of Real Estate Development, DASH, asked the Council to support their CPA proposal seeking to increase density to provide more housing. She thanked staff for its thorough analysis demonstrating that the CPA meets all of the threshold review criteria. She thanked the Housing Development Consortium and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce for their support. She thanked the Eastside Housing Roundtable for their work to create more housing choices. She thanked SHAG (Sustainable Housing for Ageless Generations), the YMCA, and Eastside Friends of Seniors for their support. She thanked the Councilmembers who reached out to her following the Planning Commission meeting on March 10 and encouraged the Council to support the proposal.
- (i) Matt Jack, Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), thanked the City for initiating the South Downtown I-405 Access study. He expressed support for the Lake Hills Connector option with a southbound on-ramp and the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with a southbound on-ramp. He said the BDA would typically advocate for one alternative. However, the two alternatives are very different and neither are perfect solutions. Mr. Jack referred the Council to the BDA's letter outlining their rationale and suggestions. He said the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension has more negative property, environmental, and access impacts at a higher overall project cost. He said the option has the potential for delaying the East Main rezone work and other land use planning efforts that are essential to supporting growth. Mr. Jack said the BDA's support of the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street alternative is contingent upon the adoption of the East Main Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) this fall. He said the BDA looks forward to continuing to work with the City. He thanked Councilmembers for their leadership.
- (j) Jared Axelrod, Amazon, expressed support for the LUCA that would establish reduced minimum parking requirements for areas with frequent transit service. He noted the need for affordable and workforce housing and for identifying the appropriate parking requirements. He said Amazon is developing office space in downtown Bellevue in part due to access to bus and light rail transit. He said Amazon provides free ORCA cards for all employees as well as its own shuttle services. He noted that a high percentage of Amazon employees walk or take transit to work. He thanked the Council for their work.

- (k) Jessica Clawson, McCullough Hill Leary, encouraged the Council to support the DASH CPA proposal [Agenda Item 10(c)]. Referring to Item 10(b), Ms. Clawson said that parking requirements are a barrier to the development of affordable housing. She said that, as fewer parking spaces become available, people will make different choices in travel modes, especially if given free ORCA cards by their employers.
  - (l) Michelle Niethammer said she was speaking on behalf of a group of northeast Bellevue residents who are opposed to the minimum parking Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) as written. She said the LUCA goes beyond the state mandate and might not be in the best interest of Bellevue residents. Ms. Niethammer said that while the group supports the objective of creating greater affordability in Bellevue housing, the 2015 King County study is based on data collected in 2012. She said the Denver study is more recent but there is no evidence that the two communities are comparable. She said Denver's population and land area are nearly five times that of Bellevue's. She noted that statistics related to the multifamily tax exemption (MFTE) program indicate that most tenants of affordable units have two or more cars. She expressed concern that the LUCA lowers minimum parking requirements for affordable housing. She said the proposed LUCA goes beyond state law in reducing parking requirements. She noted that many areas of Bellevue do not support walkability, which she believes is in direct conflict with the City's Vision Zero goals. She described seeing a person in a wheelchair operating in the street due to the lack of sidewalks.
- 5. Reports of Community Councils, Boards, and Commissions: None.
  - 6. Report of the City Manager: None.
  - 7. Council Business and New Initiatives
    - (a) Council Liaison Recommendations for 2021 Reappointments to Bellevue's Boards and Commissions

Mayor Robinson introduced discussion regarding the Council liaison recommendations for 2021 reappointments to boards and commissions.

Councilmember Lee recommended the reappointment of Vanja Knezevic and Ling Zhuang to the Environmental Services Commission.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis recommended the reappointment of Timothy Ma and Shari McClure to the Human Services Commission.

Councilmember Robertson recommended the reappointment of Kimberley Anderson, Gunjan Murarka, and Ankit Saraf to the Library Advisory Board.

Ms. Robertson recommended the reappointment of Loreana Marcianti to the Transportation Commission.

Councilmember Zahn recommended the reappointment of Heather Trescases to the Parks and Community Services Board.

Councilmember Barksdale recommended the reappointment of Mohammad Malakoutian to the Planning Commission.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the reappointments to the Boards and Commissions as recommended, each with a term expiring on May 31, 2025.  
Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

8. Consent Calendar

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve the Consent Calendar, and  
Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion to approve the Consent Calendar carried by a vote of 7-0, and the following items were approved:

- (a) Council Minutes  
Minutes of March 15, 2021 Regular Meeting  
Minutes of March 22, 2021 Regular Meeting
- (b) Resolution No. 9916: 1) adopting the recommendations for use of Community Development Block Grant funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV3) as transmitted by the Human Services Commission; 2) authorizing the City Manager or his designee to submit a proposal to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for CDBG-CV3 funding; 3) authorizing the City Manager or his designee to accept a grant award contract with HUD; and 4) authorizing the City Manager or his designee to enter into agreements with grant subrecipients.
- (c) Resolution No. 9917 authorizing execution of a change order with IMCO General Construction in the amount of \$651,002.67, inclusive of applicable taxes, for a total contract amount of \$16,397,427.55 for Meydenbauer Bay Park Phase 1 construction, and execution of all documents necessary to implement settlement of a potential claim by IMCO for additional construction related costs.
- (d) Resolution No. 9918 authorizing execution of a general services contract with Diamond Parking Inc., for parking monitoring services at Downtown Park, Meydenbauer Bay Park and the City of Bellevue Marina in addition to on-call parking enforcement at various park sites in an amount not to exceed \$315,602.79, plus all applicable taxes.

9. Public Hearing

- (a) Resolution No. 9919 authorizing the execution of documents necessary to release a portion of an existing water easement located at 15027 NE Bel Red Road, which has been declared surplus to the City's needs and is no longer required for providing continued public utility service; the granting and recording of such release being deemed in the best interest of the public.

City Manager Miyake introduced the public hearing and Council action to release a portion of a water easement at the Highland Middle School.

Ira McDaniel, Real Property Division Manager, said the Bellevue School District is redeveloping the school and has rebuilt the water lines within their property. The new system is built within the City's existing easement. Mr. McDaniel noted that a fire hydrant and a segment of pipe were not needed for the new water system and have been removed.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to open the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

No one came forward to comment.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to close the public hearing, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.
- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to approve Resolution No. 9919, and Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

10. Study Session Items

- (a) South Downtown I-405 Access Study

City Manager Miyake said staff is asking the Council to identify a preferred alternative for the South Downtown I-405 Access project and to direct staff to provide the recommended alternative to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

Andrew Singelakis, Transportation Director, noted that WSDOT will conduct an environmental review of I-405 access when funding becomes available. He said the project will help provide a degree of certainty for the development community. He recalled that the I-405 master plan identified the need for freeway access from the south end of downtown Bellevue. The study to identify the alternatives preferred by the City was initiated in early 2020. The study analyzed 12

alternatives, and five of the alternatives passed the Tier 1 fatal flaw screening. On September 28, 2020, the Council approved five alternatives to carry forward for Tier 2 analysis. Mr. Singelakis said staff's recommendation is the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative.

Shuming Yan, Engineering Manager, said the Main Street alternative and three of the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street alternatives did not pass Tier 1 screening. The remaining five alternatives are: 1) Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp, 2) SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension and southbound on-ramp, 3) SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with inside access, 4) NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension, and 5) no build option.

The Lake Hills Connector alternative provides the best balance between improving travel time and minimizing impacts, and is better aligned with the East Main transit-oriented development (TOD) plan. Mr. Yan said this alternative would allow the East Main Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) work to continue without delay. He said that stakeholders and the community are generally supportive of this alternative.

The Tier 2 evaluation of alternatives criteria included alignment with adopted plans and policies, travel time, access and safety, impact on property development, and project costs. Mr. Yan compared the travel times of the alternatives. The SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with inside access provides the highest capacity with both on-ramps and off-ramps as well as the greatest reduction in travel time.

Mr. Yan compared the safety and multimodal access of the alternatives, noting that the Lake Hills Connector alternative does not add pedestrian or bike facilities. Both of the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension alternatives provide a new sidewalk and a separate bike trail.

Mr. Yan compared the property development impacts of the alternatives. The Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative impacts one parcel. The SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension alternatives connect to 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and the Lake Hills Connector but have no access to properties on 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. The NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension over I-405 impacts four parcels.

Mr. Yan compared the planning level cost estimates for the alternatives: 1) SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with inside access (\$325 million), 2) SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with southbound on-ramp (\$175 million), 3) Lake Hills Connector (\$150 million), and 4) NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension (\$125 million). The estimates include engineering, right-of-way, and construction costs.

Mr. Yan described the community engagement process. The study was initiated in June 2020 and online open house meetings were held in August 2020 and February 2021. Public outreach also included newsletters, stakeholder meetings, interest group meetings, and individual briefings. There was broad support among stakeholders, which included property owners and developers within the study area, for the Lake Hills Connector and two SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street alternatives. The latter received the most support. However, adjacent property owners voiced strong opposition. Mr. Yan noted there was little support for the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension project.

Community outreach included two online open houses with a total of 3,081 visitors and 1,533 comments. Individuals expressed support for improving I-405 access as well as pedestrian, bike, and transit connections. However, there were concerns about funding and costs and that the

projects will not solve the traffic congestion on I-405. Mr. Yan noted that there were suggestions to reconsider the Main Street alternative.

Mr. Yan said the Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA), Chamber of Commerce, and Eastside Transportation Association (ETA) all support the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative. The BDA also recommends the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street southbound on-ramp alternative contingent upon the adoption of the East Main LUCA this fall. The ETA recommends implementing the southbound auxiliary lane immediately and reconsidering the NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension project in the future.

The Lake Hills Connector alternative aligns with the East Main TOD plan and requires the least policy changes. It offers significant travel benefits at a lower cost and received broad stakeholder and community support. Both of the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street alternatives require an amendment to the East Main TOD plan, which will delay the East Main LUCA work. They provide greater transportation benefits at a higher cost and received broad stakeholder support. The NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street extension provides little overall transportation benefit, received minimal public support, and has significant impacts to adjacent properties and wetlands.

Mr. Yan said staff recommends the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative because it provides significant travel benefits with minimal property and environmental impacts at a reasonable cost. The alternative is better aligned with the East Main TOD plan and allows the ongoing East Main planning work to continue without delay.

Mayor Robinson noted that she lives downtown and she understands that many people would like to be able to walk or bike to work. However, this project addresses access to I-405, which includes the goal of reducing traffic on surface streets. Ms. Robinson said she supports staff's recommendation for the Lake Hills Connector alternative. However, she is disappointed that it does not provide pedestrian or bike improvements.

Mr. Singelakis said the Capital Investment Program (CIP) Plan includes a 2023 project for bike lanes on SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street leading to the freeway. He said the City would like to expand the project east of I-405 in the future. Mayor Robinson expressed concern about waiting until 2023 for the project, noting that SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street is dangerous for cyclists.

Councilmember Lee noted that the no build and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street alternatives are not beneficial in terms of enhancing access to I-405. He said the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street extension with inside access provides the most direct access to I-405. He concurred with Mayor Robinson that the purpose of the project is to improve access to I-405, in part to alleviate traffic congestion on city streets. He expressed support for the Lake Hills Connector alternative and acknowledged that none of the alternatives are perfect. A benefit of the alternative is that it will not delay the City's work on the East Main LUCA. While he likes the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative, he acknowledged that it is very expensive.

Referring to the Mayor's concern about the lack of pedestrian and bike facilities in the Lake Hills Connector alternative, City Manager Miyake said he will work with finance staff to determine potential funding.



Councilmember Barksdale said he too is disappointed that the Lake Hills Connector alternative does not include pedestrian and bike connections. He said he would like to see if there is a way to prioritize those improvements with other transportation projects.

Councilmember Robertson said that Victor Bishop, who knows the I-405 master plan well, emphasized during oral communications that the project is meant to be an access project for the south side of downtown. She said the Lake Hills Connector alternative is located across I-405 from the downtown. She asked staff to comment on whether the alternative is the best transportation solution for downtown I-405 access.

Mr. Singelakis acknowledged that the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative is the best solution for handling vehicular traffic throughout the downtown area. However, it would require moving I-405 to the west with three and one-half years of construction. He said the Lake Hills Connector alternative provides the highest return on investment. Ms. Robertson said she likes the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access option because it provides one point for I-405 access and parallels nicely with the NE 6<sup>th</sup> Street HOV access to I-405. In further response, Mr. Singelakis said the transportation benefits are similar for the Lake Hills Connector and SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternatives, although the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street option is slightly better. He confirmed that the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street alternative would provide better pedestrian and bike access across the freeway.

Councilmember Robertson highlighted that two of the issues with the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative are the cost and the land use planning impacts. Responding to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Singelakis said that all of WSDOT's projects are subject to an environmental review process, and impacts will be mitigated. Ms. Robertson said the project could increase property values in the area.

Councilmember Zahn observed that the selection of an alternative is based on a number of tradeoffs. She agreed that the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative provides the best travel improvements. However, she noted the potential negative impacts to surrounding properties as well as the resulting lack of access to 114<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Ms. Zahn said that, if the Lake Hills Connector alternative is chosen, she supports pedestrian and bike improvements on SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Responding to Ms. Zahn, Mr. Yan said that SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street would need to be raised to cross I-405.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation and the robust public outreach. He concurred with the Mayor's interest in implementing pedestrian and bike improvements and asked whether staff spoke with groups with a pedestrian and bike lens. Mr. Yan said that more than 3,000 visitors viewed the online information, and approximately 15 percent provided written comments. He said there were a number of comments advocating for non-motorized improvements. Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted that multimodal transportation and completing the bike infrastructure are priorities for the Council.

Mr. Nieuwenhuis concurred with Councilmember Robertson regarding the benefits of the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative. He said, however, that it is somewhat cost-prohibitive and presents more significant land use impacts. He expressed support for the Lake Hills Connector alternative and reiterated his interest in pedestrian and bike improvements.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for the Lake Hills Connector option. He likes the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access alternative. However, he noted the considerable environmental impacts.

Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. Singelakis said there is a CIP project for widening the intersection at SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Singelakis said that access to I-405 from SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street will remain in place.

Mr. Stokes expressed concern that none of the projects significantly improve conditions based on the reduction of seconds in travel time. He is concerned that any of the projects could cause further traffic congestion until the I-90/I-405 interchange is built. He said traffic will continue to be slow from SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to Coal Creek Parkway. He observed that the alternatives, including the Lake Hills Connector, will channel more cars into a bottleneck. He does not want to delay the East Main LUCA work. He noted that the I-405 access project is not likely to be built for some time.

Mayor Robinson noted that this is WSDOT's project. Mr. Stokes said he would like to move forward to complete the East Main planning work without further delays. Mr. Singelakis said it is a priority for the City to advocate for funding from the state legislature.

Mayor Robinson noted staff's comments earlier in the day about the savings of seconds in travel time, which was that the benefits are more significant when combined with other transportation improvements. Mr. Yan thanked the public for reviewing the technical data and providing insightful input in evaluating the options. He noted the City's interest in providing multimodal travel options. He said light rail will begin operating in a couple of years. He said the City has pedestrian and bike improvements, as well as safety projects, to be implemented. He said the primary goal of the South Downtown I-405 Access project is to provide freeway access and not to solve traffic congestion in the city. Mr. Yan said it is one tool to address future growth in Bellevue and to mitigate congestion on city streets. He noted that WSDOT plans to add capacity on the ramps from I-405 to eastbound I-90 and to add lanes at Coal Creek Parkway to address traffic congestion.

Councilmember Lee acknowledged that the I-405 access project is one of multiple future transportation projects. He suggested focusing on the access objective in order to move forward and to not get distracted by additional project elements, which can be addressed later.

Councilmember Barksdale asked whether there was any consideration about having a dedicated pedestrian and bike crossing as a separate project. Mr. Singelakis said there is a CIP project to provide bike lanes on SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street heading east to the freeway.

Councilmember Robertson said she is reluctant to choose the easiest or least expensive option if it is not the best transportation solution. She noted that the City fought hard to achieve the best

solution for light rail. She observed that the Lake Hills Connector alternative will improve access to the Wilburton area. However, she does not believe it is the best solution for connecting to the downtown or for providing pedestrian and bike facilities. She said the SE 6<sup>th</sup> Street inside access option appears to be the best transportation solution. However, she will support the Lake Hills Connector option if that is the desire of the majority of the Council.

Councilmember Zahn suggested focusing on factors that the Council does not want to see. She noted that some of the options do not work well with advancing the East Main LUCA work. She reiterated her support for the Lake Hills Connector alternative, with the condition that pedestrian and bike facilities can be implemented on SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis reiterated that he supports the Lake Hills Connector option.

Councilmember Stokes expressed skepticism that the project will move forward in the foreseeable future.

Mayor Robinson noted a Council consensus to support the Lake Hills Connector alternative.

- Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to identify the Lake Hills Connector southbound on-ramp alternative and associated road improvements as the alternative preferred by the City of Bellevue. Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

At 7:48 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:03 p.m.

- (b) Recommended Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) to establish lower minimum residential parking requirements for certain developments in areas with frequent transit service

City Manager Miyake introduced discussion regarding the recommended Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) to establish lower minimum residential parking requirements for certain developments in areas with frequent transit service. Noting previous discussions with the Council, Mr. Miyake said staff is seeking Council direction to prepare an ordinance following tonight's meeting.

Mike Brennan, Director of the Development Services Department (DSD), said that the recommended LUCA is responsive to the Affordable Housing Strategy and brings the City's code into alignment with new parking requirements in state law. He noted that the LUCA establishes lower minimum parking requirements. However, a developer may provide additional parking facilities if desired. He said that parking requirements are frequently a barrier to providing affordable housing.

Trisna Tanus, DSD Consulting Attorney, said the objectives of the LUCA are to: 1) support recommendations from the 2017 Affordable Housing Strategy and the Transit Master Plan, and 2) conform with new provisions of RCW 36.70A.620 and 36.70A.698. The Affordable Housing

Strategy adopted in 2017 documents the City's commitment to creating affordable housing opportunities in Bellevue by lowering costs to building affordable housing (Action C-5) and reducing parking requirements for apartments around light rail stations (Action B-1).

Ms. Tanus said that RCW 36.70A.620 sets a cap on the minimum parking requirements that cities may impose for certain housing units near frequent transit service. She said the state law required cities to adopt conforming regulations by June 11, 2020. At that time, the Council approved interim regulations until permanent regulations can be developed. The interim official control (IOC) was extended after a public hearing last fall and is set to expire on May 18.

Under state law, the minimum parking required for affordable housing near frequent transit service cannot exceed 0.75 parking spaces for studio units and one space for one-bedroom or larger apartments. There is no minimum parking requirement for housing for senior adults and people with disabilities near frequent transit service, and there are no restrictions on parking for employees and visitors at those facilities. RCW 36.70A.698 restricts imposing an off-street parking requirement for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) located within one-quarter mile of a major transit stop, with limited exceptions. Ms. Tanus said the current IOC established temporary regulations that align with RCW 36.70A.620.

Ms. Tanus recalled that, following previous discussion, the Council directed staff to analyze four additional topics for the permanent code amendment: 1) appropriate radius from frequent transit service (one-quarter mile versus one-half mile), 2) downtown residential visitor parking requirements, 3) certainty within the parking requirement departure process, and 4) parking-specific incentives for affordable housing.

Kristina Gallant, Senior Planner, described the six topic areas reflected in the LUCA: 1) frequent transit criteria, 2) parking ratio, 3) parking requirement departure process, 4) downtown visitor parking requirements, 5) affordable housing incentives, and 6) ADUs. Minimum parking requirements for affordable housing apply to areas with transit service two or more times per hour within a one-quarter mile radius. Minimum parking standards for market rate multifamily, senior, and affordable housing apply to areas with transit service four or more times per hour within a one-half mile radius. In those cases, transit service includes future light rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) stops that are opening within the next two years. Ms. Gallant said the LUCA does not change the underlying zoning and applies only to areas where multifamily development is currently permitted.

Ms. Gallant described the City's recommendations reflected in the LUCA that go beyond state law requirements. The definition of affordable housing is increased from 50-percent area median income (AMI) to 80-percent AMI, and the LUCA is applicable only to permanent affordable housing. The transit service radius for areas with a higher frequency of transit service is increased from one-quarter mile to one-half mile.

Ms. Gallant said that lower parking ratios are recommended for affordable housing to provide increased flexibility for developers. She noted that developers may provide more parking than what is required. The minimum parking requirement proposed for affordable housing near transit service 2-4 times per hour is 0.75 spaces for each housing unit. The requirement for affordable

housing near transit service more than four times per hour is 0.5 spaces per unit. The requirement for market-rate multifamily housing is 0.75 parking spaces per unit, and no parking is required for senior housing residents.

Ms. Gallant said that decisions regarding parking requirement departures are tied to design review, which can present timing issues for developers. Separating the decision from design review would limit the opportunity for public comment and could create concerns regarding transparency. Ms. Gallant said the LUCA reduces the demand for parking departures by allowing for the right-sizing of parking requirements. She said staff recommends maintaining the current process and revisiting the issue in the future to consider all land uses.

Ms. Gallant said that the current downtown visitor parking standard requiring one visitor space for every 20 residential units was implemented in October 2017. She said staff recommends maintaining the current standard at this time while monitoring the performance of the requirement.

Ms. Gallant said the proposed parking requirement for ADUs is consistent with RCW 36.70A.698. The LUCA removes the requirement for one dedicated ADU parking space for property located within one-quarter mile radius of transit service with four or more stops per hour.

Public engagement activities related to the LUCA included legal noticing, holding a public hearing, direct dialogue with development community representatives and interested stakeholders, and online information.

Radhika Moolgavkar, Planning Commission Chair, said the commission discussed the LUCA during study sessions on January 13 and January 27. The public hearing was held on February 24 and participants were mostly supportive of the LUCA and agreed that it would result in additional housing in Bellevue. Some individuals expressed concern regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on transit ridership, the absence of walkability, the definition of frequent transit service, senior housing needs, and neighborhood impacts. The Planning Commission requested and received additional information, including on the topics of parking demand at affordable housing developments and the importance of walkability in supporting transit use. The commission noted that there was a lack of recent data specific to Bellevue.

Ms. Moolgavkar said the Planning Commission found that the LUCA meets the decision criteria and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, enhances the public safety and welfare, and is not contrary to the best interests of Bellevue residents and property owners. The Planning Commission recommended the adoption of the LUCA without modification by a vote of 6-1.

Ms. Tanus said that a courtesy hearing will be held with the East Bellevue Community Council (EBCC) on April 6. Following the City Council's future action on the LUCA, the EBCC will hold a public hearing and take action to approve or disapprove the City Council's ordinance. The IOC expires on May 18.

Mayor Robinson thanked staff for the presentation.

Councilmember Barksdale, liaison to the Planning Commission, thanked commissioners for their work and expressed support for their recommendation. He suggested prioritizing the development of sidewalks in areas with frequent transit service.

Mr. Brennan noted that there have been significant investments in sidewalks through the neighborhood transportation levy approved by the voters a few years ago. He said that walkability improvements are anticipated as more development occurs.

Councilmember Robertson said she supports the Planning Commission's recommendation. She noted that the LUCA conforms with state law and addresses a significant barrier to providing affordable housing. She said the housing provided today will serve a somewhat different community demographic in the future, especially with the continued growth in information technology employers in Bellevue. She anticipates that future residents will be less reliant on cars as transit options are expanded.

Ms. Robertson said she takes seriously the concerns expressed by residents regarding Vision Zero principles, and she supports Councilmember Barksdale's suggestion for more safe pedestrian routes. She said the neighborhood transportation levy focuses on providing safe walking routes, including around schools. She noted the Safe Routes to Schools program and suggested a Safe Routes to Transit emphasis. Ms. Robertson said she appreciates that the LUCA calls for consistency with King County Metro and Sound Transit routes because they do change as often as twice annually. She noted that she serves on the King County Regional Transit Committee. Councilmember Robertson expressed support for the Planning Commission's recommendation.

Councilmember Zahn said she supports the recommendation. She observed that if the LUCA can help to right-size parking requirements, there will be fewer requests for parking requirement departures. She concurred with her colleagues' suggestions for more sidewalks and enhanced walkability to access transit services. She suggested looking at the City's state and federal funding priorities to accentuate the City's advocacy for more transit service. She noted that the proposed federal infrastructure plan includes funding for transit service and Vision Zero priorities. She expressed support for developing a walkability index and for continuing to work with King County Metro to ensure that transit routes in Bellevue are preserved. Ms. Zahn thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their work on the LUCA.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis thanked staff for the presentation. He noted comments during earlier oral communications regarding the lack of required parking at housing for senior adults and disabled individuals and whether that might violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or anti-discrimination laws.

Mr. Brennan said the City aligned its ordinance with state law. He said the draft LUCA has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and no concerns about discrimination or ADA regulations were raised. He reiterated that the LUCA provides minimum parking requirements. However, a developer may choose to provide more parking.

Responding to Mr. Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Tanus said there is a lack of recent data regarding parking needs in Bellevue. She noted that the Community Development Department plans to conduct a comprehensive parking study for both residential and non-residential development after light rail has been in place. In further response to Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis, Ms. Tanus said staff's analysis of the appropriate transit service radius from affordable housing balanced the objective of encouraging affordable housing with the potential impacts. She said the Planning Commission determined that using one-half mile instead of one-quarter mile would potentially generate more affordable housing units.

Councilmember Stokes thanked staff and the Planning Commission for their work. He concurred with Councilmember Robertson's earlier comments.

Councilmember Lee expressed support for the Planning Commission's recommendation. He likes the flexibility in the LUCA for right-sizing parking facilities. He acknowledged that parking requirements discourage the development of affordable housing, and he expressed support for the one-half mile radius guideline for transit service. He concurred with his colleagues' suggestions for improved walkability. He noted the need to address the demand for parking facilities at senior housing.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for Councilmember Robertson's Safe Routes to Transit suggestion. Responding to Ms. Robinson, Ms. Tanus said the City does not make a distinction between assisted living and independent living facilities. Mayor Robinson noted that maintaining a car often helps older adults remain independent. She said many older adults would find it difficult to carry groceries or other items while walking. She said the need for parking at assisted living facilities is much lower than the demand for parking in independent living developments. Mayor Robinson said she would like the City to reconsider the definition of senior living facilities.

Referring to ADUs, Mayor Robinson said there is no guarantee that the residents will not have a car, even if there is frequent transit service within one-quarter mile. She asked whether the owner of an ADU could prohibit a tenant from having a car. Ms. Tanus said that the ADU parking requirement conforms with state law and the City is limited in its ability to make any modifications. She noted that the reduced minimum parking requirement applies to housing within one-quarter mile of transit service with four or more stops per hour.

Mr. Brennan said it would be difficult to prohibit someone in an ADU from owning a car and to enforce that type of regulation. He noted that many neighborhoods in Bellevue do not have transit service four times per hour within a one-quarter mile radius.

Responding to Mayor Robinson regarding senior living facilities, Ms. Tanus said that state regulations do not make a distinction between types of senior housing. Ms. Tanus said that parking facilities are largely market-driven, and a builder or facility may choose to provide parking as an amenity to attract residents. Mayor Robinson said she does not want to limit parking for older adults who find it difficult to use transit and want to continue to own a car to remain independent.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for the Planning Commission's recommendation.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to direct staff to bring back the LUCA ordinance for final action at a future meeting. Councilmember Stokes seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

(c) City-initiated Proposals for 2021 Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) Work Program

City Manager Miyake opened discussion regarding the City-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) proposal to amend Transportation Element policies.

Emil King, Assistant Director, Community Development Department, said that Council-initiated CPA proposals require a majority of the Council to provide direction to move them to final review with no threshold review required. The privately initiated CPA proposals to be discussed later do require threshold review by the Planning Commission.

Kevin McDonald, Transportation Senior Planner, said staff is requesting direction to initiate Transportation Element policy amendments related to multimodal concurrency and repealing the Comprehensive Transportation Project List (CTPL) from the Comprehensive Plan. He said the Planning Commission is currently preparing a recommendation to move the City away from a vehicle-centered approach to a multimodal concurrency approach. He said the approach has been a topic of conversation for a number of years, dating back to 2017 when Councilmember Zahn served as Chair of the Transportation Commission. Mr. McDonald recalled that the Council approved in January a scope of work and a budget and directed the Transportation Commission to prepare policies for a multimodal approach to concurrency.

The second topic for consideration relates to the CTPL. During the 2015 major update to the Comprehensive Plan, the Council directed staff to create the project list based on a recommendation from the Transportation Commission. At that time, there were 781 projects in different sections of the Comprehensive Plan, and many of those have been completed. Staff recommends removing the list from the plan and replacing it with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in 2022. The Council updates the TIP annually to reflect planned projects.

Councilmember Zahn expressed support for the proposed policy CPAs and thanked the Transportation Commission for their work.

Councilmember Robertson thanked the Transportation Commission for their work. She said it is important to complete this work this year. Otherwise it would potentially be difficult to issue building permits in the future if concurrency standards are exceeded. She thanked staff for their hard work on this issue over a number of years.

Responding to Councilmember Lee, Mr. McDonald said this work is related to the development of the Mobility Implementation Plan, which is essentially a transportation master plan with a



couple of differences. Mr. McDonald said the Bellevue Transit Master Plan and the Pedestrian-Bicycle Transportation Plan will be folded into the Mobility Implementation Plan. Mr. McDonald noted that when Councilmember Lee served as liaison to the Transportation Commission, the commission initiated much of this work, including the development of recommendations that led to the proposed CPAs. Councilmember Lee commended staff and the commission for completing this work.

- Deputy Mayor moved to direct staff to initiate the identified Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) proposals into the 2021 CPA work program, incorporating policies from the Transportation Element related to multimodal concurrency and repealing the Comprehensive Transportation Project List (CTPL) and adding the projects to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.
- The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

11. Land Use: None.

12. Other Ordinances, Resolutions, and Motions

(a) Threshold Review of Planning Commission's Recommendations

Mr. Miyake said staff is seeking Council consideration of the Planning Commission's threshold review recommendations for two privately initiated CPA proposals. He recalled that the CPA proposals were presented to the Council in February.

Thara Johnson, Comprehensive Planning Manager, said staff is seeking Council direction regarding whether to move the privately initiated CPA proposals forward to final review.

Ms. Johnson highlighted the threshold review criteria for privately initiated proposals. The deadline for submitting 2021 CPA applications was September 15, 2020, and the City received two applications known as 15 Lake Bellevue and DASH (Downtown Action to Save Housing) Glendale. The 15 Lake Bellevue site is located in the BelRed Subarea and the Wilburton Commercial Study Area. The DASH Glendale site is located just outside of the Wilburton study area in the Wilburton/NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street Subarea. The community engagement process included the receipt of three written comments regarding the 15 Lake Bellevue CPA, and one person spoke at the threshold review hearings. The DASH Glendale CPA received seven written comments and five individuals spoke during the threshold review hearings. Ms. Johnson stated her understanding that the Council received additional written public comments today.

Radhika Moolgavkar, Planning Commission Chair, said the commission recommended by a vote of 4-1 (plus one abstention) that the 15 Lake Bellevue CPA should not be included in the 2021 work program. The CPA proposed a map amendment from BelRed-General Commercial (BR-GC) to BelRed Office Residential 2 (BR-OR-2) on a 2.8-acre site and to amend Policy S-BR-96 for maximum building height allowances. The commission determined that the application did not meet all of the threshold review criteria found in LUC 20.30i.140. The commission was concerned about criteria C, D, F, and G. The commission found that the proposed CPA raises

policy issues that would be better addressed through an ongoing work program because the site is located within the BelRed Subarea and was subsequently included in the Wilburton Commercial Area Study that examined areas north and south of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent to the light rail station. Chair Moolgavkar noted that the decision related to threshold review Decision Criteria C, which states that the CPA should not raise policy issues outside of the annual CPA process.

Ms. Moolgavkar said the commission also found that the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal cannot be reasonably reviewed within the resources and timeframe of the current CPA work program. The commission determined that a better understanding of the redevelopment capacity of the site and the potential impacts cannot be conducted in isolation from the rest of the Lake Bellevue area and the larger Wilburton Subarea. That decision is responsive to Decision Criteria D, which requires that the CPA proposal could be reasonably reviewed within available resources.

The question of the geographic scope of the CPA proposal to include property to the west or any of the other BR-GC areas could not occur without limiting the expansion of the geographic scope of the proposal to anything less than the 10 BR-GC designated properties contiguous to Lake Bellevue [Decision Criteria F]. Ms. Moolgavkar said that geographic scoping is appropriate only for the subarea plan amendment process and not the limited annual process.

Chair Moolgavkar said the Planning Commission found that the proposed 15 Lake Bellevue CPA is inconsistent with general policies in the Comprehensive Plan for site-specific proposals and with other policy implementation [Decision Criteria G]. She said the Wilburton study does not allow a conclusion that the CPA application would meet the goal of the Land Use Element in the BelRed Subarea Plan.

Moving to the DASH Glendale proposal for a map amendment from Multifamily-Medium (MF-M) to Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) on two parcels totaling 7.5 acres, Ms. Moolgavkar said the commission recommended by a vote of 3-2 that the proposed amendment should not be included in the 2020 work program. She noted that staff recommended moving the CPA proposal forward to final review. The commission determined that the application did not meet all of the decision criteria for threshold review, specifically Decision Criteria C. The commission determined that the proposal raised policy and land use issues that are more appropriately addressed through an ongoing work program approved by the Council as the site became part of the Wilburton study area based on Council direction in 2018. The commission recommended that the proposal should be evaluated as part of the Wilburton implementation effort.

Chair Moolgavkar noted that staff recommended moving the DASH Glendale proposal forward to final review and felt that the proposal met all of the decision criteria. The site was not originally part of the Wilburton Commercial Area Study until the Council directed that the site be included in that study. Ms. Moolgavkar said DASH previously indicated that the building age and refinancing considerations played an increasingly deadline-driven role in their need to make a decision about the future of their project.

Ms. Moolgavkar said that in 2018, the Council recognized the unique opportunity represented by the combination of the DASH site's proximity to the broader Wilburton study area and transit

services and a willingness by the property owner to provide workforce housing. The Wilburton Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) heard from staff that the CPA proposal could add to the affordable housing supply identified in the Wilburton Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Ms. Moolgavkar said staff determined that the proposed use of the NMU designation to consider the DASH Glendale CPA in the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy presents a rationale for examining this application through the annual CPA process.

Ms. Johnson noted that the 15 Lake Bellevue site is located west of 120<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and north of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In addition to changing the map designation, the applicant is seeking to amend policy S-B-96 regarding maximum building height allowances. The DASH Glendale site is located east of 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE in the BelRed Subarea.

Ms. Johnson requested Council direction regarding whether to move the CPA proposals forward to final review.

Mayor Robinson thanked Chair Moolgavkar for the presentation and for her service on the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Barksdale, liaison to the Planning Commission, thanked the commissioners and staff for their work. Given that the DASH property was not originally included in the Wilburton study, the timing constraints and financing constraints for the applicant, and the need for more housing, Mr. Barksdale said he supports staff's recommendation to move the DASH Glendale CPA proposal forward to final review.

Mr. Barksdale expressed support for the Planning Commission's recommendation to not move the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal forward to final review. He said the site has always been included in the Wilburton Commercial Area Study and he believes more time is needed to discuss the site and surrounding properties.

Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis concurred with Councilmember Barksdale's support for moving the DASH Glendale proposal forward to final review and not moving the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal forward. He thanked the Planning Commission for their hard work. Mr. Nieuwenhuis noted the demand for housing and the opportunity to create 500 affordable housing units as a result of the DASH Glendale proposal.

Councilmember Stokes expressed support for moving the DASH Glendale proposal forward to final review. He noted that it is consistent with the Affordable Housing Strategy. He expressed concern regarding the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal and its consistency with the threshold review decision criteria.

Responding to Mr. Stokes, Mr. King said the intent is to wrap up staff's work on the East Main Land Use Code Amendment (LUCA) and the Grand Connection and to move staff resources to the Wilburton planning effort. Mr. King said the Lake Bellevue properties will be included in the analysis.

Councilmember Stokes opined that the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal presents an opportunity that should continue to be studied, in part to address housing and environmental issues.

Councilmember Robertson said she supports the DASH Glendale proposal and believes it meets the threshold review decision criteria. She recalled that the Council was ready to initiate the proposal a few years ago but the Planning Commission decided to wait at that time.

Regarding the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal, Ms. Robertson said there have been a number of times where she suggested that Lake Bellevue would be better addressed through another process. She said the Wilburton Commercial Study Area CAC's report was released almost three years ago. However, it has not yet been sent to the Planning Commission. She said the CAC report does not include any changes for the Lake Bellevue area, and she shares Councilmember Stokes's concern about missing out on an opportunity. She said she would support initiating a similar proposal in the BelRed Subarea as well because the review of that subarea plan was originally set to occur in 2014. Ms. Robertson said that light rail will begin operating soon and it is important to address land use issues to ensure that transit-oriented development (TOD) is implemented and housing is built. She expressed support for moving the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal to final review for further analysis.

Councilmember Zahn expressed support for the DASH Glendale CPA proposal. She asked whether there would be sufficient staff resources for further analysis of the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal if it is moved forward to final review to determine the impact on other BR-GC properties. Ms. Johnson said the applicant initially requested that other BR-GC properties be included in the geographic scoping. However, the Planning Commission recommended to not grant geographic scoping because it would result in including 9-10 parcels, which should be evaluated as part of the subarea planning process. If the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal is advanced to final review, staff would evaluate the application against the decision criteria. Ms. Johnson said additional environmental review would be required as well.

In further response to Ms. Zahn, Ms. Johnson said that staff's initial evaluation of the threshold review decision criteria for the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal determined that there are not adequate resources for further analysis through a separate process. Ms. Johnson said the proposal will impact the larger Wilburton Subarea planning and implementation process.

Councilmember Zahn said she supports moving the DASH Glendale proposal forward to final review and not moving the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal forward.

Councilmember Lee thanked Chair Moolgavkar for the presentation. Mr. Lee expressed support for moving the DASH Glendale project to final review. He supported the idea to include a review of Lake Bellevue within broader subarea planning efforts. He noted that the Planning Commission's vote on the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal was 3-2 and he would like a better understanding of the reasons for the dissenting votes in the future. Mr. Lee expressed support for the commission's recommendation to not move the 15 Lake Bellevue forward to final review. Mr. King said staff will provide more information to Councilmember Lee.

Mayor Robinson expressed support for moving the DASH Glendale proposal forward to final review. She observed that the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal provides a significant opportunity to improve the area and to address environmental issues. However, she concurred that further analysis is appropriate. Ms. Robinson said she supports not moving the 15 Lake Bellevue proposal to final review.

→ Deputy Mayor Nieuwenhuis moved to adopt the 2021 annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) work program to include the DASH Glendale proposal.  
Councilmember Lee seconded the motion.

→ The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

13. Unfinished Business: None.

14. New Business: None.

15. Executive Session

16. Adjournment

At 9:40 p.m., Mayor Robinson declared the meeting adjourned.

Charmaine Arredondo, CMC  
City Clerk

/kaw